An entirely original Comic Opera,

IN TWO ACTS,

ENTITLED

THE

MOUNTEBANKS.

WRITTEN BY

W. S. GILBERT.

COMPOSED BY

ALFRED CELLIER.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: CHAPPELL & CO., 50, New Bond Street, W.

Agents:

New York: NOVELLO, EWER & CO.

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5. Stay, my charmer ... ... *Sterndale Bennett*
6. Maiden mine ... ... ,,

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3. Bid me good-bye ... ... *Paolo Tosti*
4. It came with the merry May ... ... ,,
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6. Minuet (from Samson) ... ... *De Sivrai*

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Produced at the LYRIC THEATRE, LONDON, under the management of Mr. HORACE SEDGER, on Monday, January 4th, 1892.

THE MOUNTEBANKS.

Dramatis Personæ:

ARROSTINO ANNEGATO (*Captain of the Tamorras—a Secret Society*).

GIORGIO RAVIOLI, LUIGI SPAGHETTI } (*Members of his Band*).

ALFREDO (*a Young Peasant, loved by* ULTRICE, *but in love with* TERESA).

PIETRO (*Proprietor of a Troupe of Mountebanks*).

BARTOLO (*his Clown*).

ELVINO DI PASTA (*an Innkeeper*).

RISOTTO (*one of the Tamorras—just married to* MINESTRA).

BEPPO.

TERESA (*a Village Beauty, loved by* ALFREDO, *and in love with herself*).

ULTRICE (*in love with, and detested by*, ALFREDO).

NITA (*a Dancing Girl*).

MINESTRA (RISOTTO'S *Bride*).

Tamorras, Monks, Village Girls, &c.

ACT I.

Exterior of ELVINO'S Inn, on a picturesque Sicilian pass. Morning. *Mr. Ryan.*

ACT II.

Exterior of a Dominican Monastery. Moonlight... ... *Mr. Ryan.*

DATE.—Early in the Nineteenth Century.

The Opera produced under the Musical Direction of Mr. IVAN CARYLL.

THE MOUNTEBANKS.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A mountain Inn on a picturesque Sicilian pass. A range of mountains, with Etna in the distance. In the middle distance, a Monastery on a steep rocky elevation.*

(*As the curtain rises, a procession of Dominican Monks winds down the set pieces on to the stage.*)

CHAUNT.

Miserere!
Umbra ferè,
  Pauper sum diabolus.
Semper dolens—
Nolens, volens,
  Monachus mœstissimus!
Quum oramus
Jejunamus—
  Eheu, otiose Deus!
Sitiens sumque,
Ac, plerumque,
  Acriter esuriens!

(*The procession of Monks exit. As they are going off,* GIORGIO, *a member of the Tamorra Secret Society, appears on the set, and watches them off. As soon as the coast is clear, he comes down and beckons to the rest of the band who, headed by* LUIGI, *appear from various entrances and come down mysteriously.*)

CHORUS OF TAMORRAS.

We are members of a Secret Society,
  Working by the moon's uncertain disc;
Our motto is "Revenge without Anxiety"—
  That is, without unnecessary risk;
We pass our nights on damp straw and squalid hay
  When trade is not particularly brisk;
But now and then we take a little holiday,
  And spend our honest earnings in a frisk

SOLO.—GIORGIO.

Five hundred years ago,
Our ancestor's next door neighbour
Had a mother whose brother,
By some means or other,
Incurred three months' hard labour.

This wrongful sentence, though,
On his head he contrived to do it,
As it tarnished our scutcheon,
Which ne'er had a touch on,
We swore mankind should rue it!

ALL. Yes—yes—yes.
We swore mankind should rue it!

So we're members of a Secret Society,
Working by the moon's uncertain disc;
Our motto is "Revenge without Anxiety"—
That is, without unnecessary risk.

Enter from Inn, ELVINO DI PASTA.

EL. Bless my heart, what are you all doing here? How comes it that you have ventured in so large a body so near to the confines of civilization? And by daylight, too! It seems rash.

GIO. Elvino, we are here under circumstances of a romantic and sentimental description. We are all going to be married!

EL. What, all of you?

LUI. One each day during the next three weeks. What do you say to that?

EL. Why, that it strikes at the root of your existence as a Secret Society, that's all. And who is to be the first?

GIO. The first is Risotto, who went down to the village this morning, disguised as a stockbroker, to be married to Minestra, and we expect the happy couple back every minute. The next is Giuseppe, he's to be married to-morrow, Luigi on Thursday, and so on until we are all worked off. As we are twenty-four in number, that will occupy twenty-four days, which are to be passed in unceasing revelry—and our captain, Arrostino, intends to confer upon you the benefit of our custom.

EL. There I think he is right. I am out of wine just now, but I have a family prescription for fine old crusted Chianti, which I will send to the nearest chemist to be compounded at once. There's only one thing for which I must stipulate: let these revels be as joyous, as reckless, as rollicking as you please—only, let them be conducted in a whisper.

LUI. What, because we are a Secret Society? We are not as secret as all that.

EL. No; but because there is a considerable portion of a poor old Alchemist on the second floor who is extremely unwell. You wouldn't go for to disturb the dying moments of a considerable portion of a poor old Alchemist?

GIO. You are unusually considerate. What's the matter with him?

EL. Why, the poor old boy is continually blowing himself up with dynamite in his researches after the Philosopher's Stone. Well, that's nothing—it's all in the day's work, and he's used to it. But this time he has blown himself up worse than usual, and several of the bits are missing; if you come across anything of the kind they are his, and I'm sure you'll behave honourably, and give them up at once.

GIO. We swear!

EL. Bless you! Now, the Alchemist has hitherto paid for his board and lodging in halfpence, with a written undertaking to turn them all into gold as soon as his discovery is completed; consequently the dictates of common humanity prompt us to give him every chance (*noise of explosion within*). Up he goes again! Excuse me one minute, while I go and collect him.

[*Exit* ELVINO.

Enter Chorus of Village Girls, dancing, and heralding the approach of RISOTTO *and* MINESTRA.

CHORUS OF GIRLS.

Come all the maidens in merry community;
Gay and jocose,
Hither we wend.
Risotto, Minestra, are knitted in unity;
Nobody knows
How it will end.
Risotto is handsome and really delectable—
Stalwart and tall;
Second to none.
Minestra, nice-looking and very respectable.
So we are all—
Every one.

ALL. So {you / we} are all—
Every one.

Enter RISOTTO *and* MINESTRA.

DUET.—RISOTTO *and* MINESTRA.

MIN. If you please, I'm now a member of your band—
RIS. If you please, she's—
MIN. Now allow me, pray, to speak.
I am married—
RIS She's my wife, you understand.
MIN. If you interrupt, I'll leave you in a week.
RIS. I really think I might—
MIN. You are very impolite!
RIS. But I wanted to explain—
MIN. Well, now there you go again!
If you kindly will permit me,
I can perfectly acquit me:
I'm a lady!
RIS. She's a lady!
MIN. Very good, then I refrain!

RIS. Allow me to present to you—my wife!
MIN. I think you'd better keep her to yourself.
RIS. She's the treasure and the pleasure of my life—
MIN. I daresay—until she's laid upon the shelf!
RIS. She's a poem, she's a song—
MIN. (*relenting*). You don't mean it—go along!
RIS. I shall love her when she's grey!
MIN. Will you really?—I daresay;
With your snapping and your snarling!
RIS. You're a dear, and you're a darling!
MIN. Do you mean it?
RIS. Yes, I mean it!
BOTH. Oh, my darling! Oh, my dear!

Enter ARROSTINO.

GIO. Three secret cheers for the Captain!
ALL (*pianissimo*). Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

ARR. How do? How do? Ah! the bride and bridegroom. Allow me (*kisses her*). Charming—at least I think so—another (*kisses her again*)—yes, charming. Risotto, my poor fellow, accept my condolences.

RIS. Condolences! You don't see anything wrong with her?

ARR. With her? Oh, no—not with *her*. My dear friend, she's bewitching. (*To* MINESTRA.) You *are* bewitching, aren't you?

MIN. I believe I'm nice.

ARR. You do? I'm delighted to hear it on such good authority.

RIS. Still, I don't see why you should condole with me.

ARR. Don't you? Never mind—you will. Now tell me, Minestra, candidly—what was it you saw in him to admire? It's not his face, of course; nor his figure—we'll put them out of the question. It can't be his conversation, because he hasn't any.

MIN. I don't know. He's got a way with him.

ARR. Has he got it with him now?

MIN. I don't know. I suppose so.

ARR. (*imperatively*). Risotto, give us an example of the way you have with you.

RIS. It's something like this—(*business of ogling*).

ARR. Oh, but my dear girl—really—dear, dear, dear!

MIN. (*apologetically*). You've got to be nearer to him for it to tell.

ARR. Well, but even then! Now, look at it in cold blood. Think of it ten years hence—when the novelty's worn off.

MIN. It does look foolish from here. Oh, I almost wish I hadn't!

RIS. My dear! (*consoling her*).

MIN. Don't—I'm so inexperienced!

ARR. I suppose so. Pity—pity! Never mind—next time you'll be older. Now, girls, I have some news for you: the Duke and Duchess of Pallavicini are to pass through the village this evening on their way to Palermo. You don't see a real Duke and Duchess every day, so the best thing you can do is to run down and prepare to receive them.

1ST GIRL. A real Duke and Duchess! Oh, that will be delightful

CHORUS OF GIRLS.

Only think, a Duke and Duchess!
Oh, but we are lucky lasses!
Hie we to our looking-glasses
For a few artistic touches.
Let us decorate our tresses
Ere the grand procession passes,
And receive the upper classes
In our most becoming dresses!

SOLO.—MINESTRA.

Go and wash your pretty faces,
Dress in ribbons and in laces,
Or expect from both their Graces
A well-merited rebuke ;
And your hair I pray you frizz it—
For it isn't often—is it?—
That you're favoured with a visit
From a Duchess and a Duke !

CHORUS.

Yes, we'll wash our pretty faces,
Dress in ribbons and in laces,
For it isn't often—is it?—
That we're favoured with a visit
From a Duke and from a Duchess,
From a Duchess and a Duke !

[*Exeunt girls—all but* MINESTRA.

ARR. Now then, to business. Anything to report?

GIO. Yes. A travelling Englishman passed our encampment this morning.

ARR. Good. We have a vendetta against all travelling Englishman. The relation of our ancestor's neighbour was arrested by a travelling Englishman. Well?

GIO. No—very bad. The cowardly ruffian was armed.

ARR. What a lily-livered hound ! That's so like these Englishmen. This growing habit of carrying revolvers is the curse of our profession. Anything else?

LUI. Only an old market-woman on a mule.

ARR. Well, we have a vendetta against all old market-women on a mule. The principal evidence against the relation of our ancestors' neighbour was an old market-woman on a mule. Did you arrest her?

LUI. We were about to do so, but she passed us in silent contempt.

ARR. Humph ! This growing habit of passing us in silent contempt strikes at the very root of our little earnings. Of course you could do nothing?

GIO. Nothing whatever. You see, as we are all to be married in the course of the next three weeks, we are bound, as men of honour, to hand over our personal charms in the same condition of substantial and decorative repair that they were in when we captivated these confiding creatures.

ARR. Naturally. It is plain that a man who offers a girl his hand, and comes to claim her with his arm amputated at the shoulder, is no longer in a position to fulfil his contract. A man who proposes with a Roman nose and turns up at the altar with a snub is guilty of

flat dishonesty, on the face of it. At the same time, that's no reason why you shouldn't pick off the bits of cotton wool in which you are in the habit of putting yourselves away at night. (*Picking scraps of wool from the coats of* PIETRO *and* GIORGIO.) To people who are unacquainted with the circumstances it might look a little unmanly. I don't know—perhaps not. (*Replacing the scraps of wool on their coats.*) However, take heart. I have an enterprise in hand which promises the very maximum of profit with the very minimum of risk. This Duke and Duchess—I believe we have a vendetta against all Dukes and Duchesses?

GIO. The judge who sentenced the relation of our ancestor's neighbour would have been a Duke if they had created him one.

ARR. The scoundrel! Then I intend to secure this Duke and Duchess.

GIO. Ah! But how? Remember the motto of our band—"Heroism without risk."

ARR. We shall do it diplomatically, of course. In the first place, we shall seize on yonder monastery—

LUI. When the monks are asleep—

ARR. Why, of course—and dress ourselves in their robes. In the meantime, Minestra, disguised as an old woman, will lure the Duke away from his escort and into our power.

MIN. *I* think I could do it better as a *young* woman.

ARR. Nonsense, you little goose—you know nothing at all about it! Listen!

SONG.—ARROSTINO.

The Duke and the Duchess as they travel through the lands
With the clips of their whips and their high jerry ho!
Will pass by the rock where that monastery stands,
In a first-class fine-folk fashion,
With their high jerry ho!
Their postillion in vermilion
And the rattle of their cattle,
And their high jerry ho!

CHORUS. With their high jerry ho! &c.

Minestra they'll find as a tottering old crone,
With her moans and her groans and her high jerry ho!
Who has tumbled down the rock, and is lying all alone,
And her cries will excite their compassion—
With her high jerry ho!
And her cropper so improper,
And her fussy "Lawk ha' mussy,"
And her high jerry ho!

CHORUS. With her high jerry ho? &c.

She'll beg that the Duke will convey her to the friars,
With their splint and their lint and their high jerry ho!
Then he'll take her up at once through the brambles and the briars;
And her woes to the monks she'll explain them.
With their high jerry ho!
With their wrappings and their strappings,
With their cackle on diachylon—
Their high jerry ho!

CHORUS. With their high jerry ho! &c.

By this time the monks will have fallen in our clutches,
With their cries of surprise and their high jerry ho!
And, disguised in their robes, we'll receive the Duke and Duchess;
And in custody close we'll detain them,
With their high jerry ho!
And the pusses of those cusses,
And a ransom very handsome
And a high jerry ho!

CHORUS. With their high jerry ho! &c.

[*Exeunt all.*

Enter ALFREDO.

RECIT.—ALFREDO.

Teresa! little word so glibly spoken!
Take pity on a heart that's all but broken!
Teresa! one-word poem trisyllabic;
An Eastern ode in sensuous A*rab*ic—
Would that thou wert as tender in thy nature
As in thy soft and tender nomenclature!

BALLAD.—ALFREDO.

Bedecked in fashion trim,
With every curl a-quiver;
Or leaping, light of limb,
O'er rivulet and river;
Or skipping o'er the lea
On daffodil and daisy;
Or stretched beneath a tree,
All languishing and lazy—
Whatever be her mood;
Be she demurely prude,
Or languishingly lazy;
My lady drives me crazy!
In vain her heart is wooed,
Whatever be her mood!

What profit should I gain
Suppose she loved me dearly?
Her coldness turns my brain
To *verge* of madness merely.
Her kiss—though, Heaven knows,
To dream of it were treason—
Would tend, as I suppose,
To utter loss of reason!
My state is not amiss;
I would not have a kiss
Which, in or out of season,
Might tend to loss of reason:
What profit in such bliss?
A fig for such a kiss!

ALF. What shabby things a man will do when he's eaten up with jealousy! But what a comfort those shabby things are to him! To prevent Teresa joining the Tamorras with the other girls, I was mean enough to bribe a farm girl to lock her in her room! I'm disgusted with myself for having stooped to such a contemptible act. Still, I'm very glad I did it.

Enter TERESA.

ALF. Teresa! *You* here?

TER. Didn't expect me, I fancy?

ALF. No—I—

TER. Locked me in my room, didn't you? Well, I escaped through the window.

ALF. Never thought of the window! However, you are too late—the Tamorras have gone. Ah! forgive me; I couldn't bear the thought of your spending the day with them.

TER. My dear Alfredo, now do you really think I am the sort of girl who would throw herself away upon a contemptible outlaw? Why, I'd much sooner marry *you*!

ALF. (*delighted*). You would? My darling! (*putting his arm round her*).

TER. Infinitely. Don't!

ALF. Why not?

TER. It's a liberty.

ALF. But after the tender avowal you have just made, surely I may be permitted ——

TER. My dear Alfredo, you jump at conclusions. I said I would rather throw myself away on a respectable young farmer than on a contemptible outlaw. But I haven't the smallest intention of throwing myself away on either.

ALF. Teresa, have some pity on me ; I am so desperately in love with you. I have founded my hopes of happiness upon you, for you are the very air I breathe, the very sunlight of my life !

TER. You are, of course, quite at liberty to profit by any light I may happen to emit ; but without wishing to say a word that would hurt your feelings, it is only right to tell you that I look a great deal higher than a mere clodhopper. For you do hop clods, you know.

ALF. I have certainly hopped some in my time.

TER. It's not my own idea. To be quite candid with you, I have often wondered what people can see in me to admire. Personally, I have a poor opinion of my attractions. They are not at all what I would have chosen if I had had a voice in the matter. But the conviction that I am a remarkably attractive girl is so generally entertained that, in common modesty, I feel bound to yield to the pressure of popular sentiment, and to look upon myself as an ineffective working minority.

ALF. But you used to like me.

TER. Decidedly. Personally, I entertain a great admiration for you. *I* think you extremely good-looking.

ALF. (*delighted*). Teresa !

TER. But the general opinion on the subject of your good looks is so entirely against me that (again regarding myself as an ineffective working minority) I feel bound to yield to the pressure of popular prejudice, and admit that you cannot be as good-looking as I feel sure you are.

ALF. (*despondingly*). Perhaps not.

BALLAD.—TERESA.

It's my opinion—though I own
In thinking so I'm quite alone—
In some respects I'm but a fright.
You like my features, I suppose ?
I'm disappointed with my nose :
Some rave about it—perhaps they're right.
My figure just sets off a fit ;
But when they say it's exquisite
(And they *do* say so), that's too strong.
I hope I'm not what people call
Opiniated ! After all,
I'm but a goose, and may be wrong !

When charms enthral
There's some excuse
For measures strong ;
And after all
I'm but a goose,
And may be wrong !

My teeth are very neat, no doubt ;
But after all they *may* fall out :
I think they will—some think they won't.
My hands are small, as you may see,
But not as small as they might be,
At least, *I* think so—others don't.
But there, a girl may preach and prate
From morning six to evening eight,
And never stop to dine,
When all the world, although misled,
Is quite agreed on any head—
And it is quite agreed on mine !

All said and done,
It's little I
Against a throng.
I'm only one,
And possibly
I may be wrong !

TER. Now, come and talk it over, like a sensible boy. (*They sit—he at her feet*). Come, tell me all about it. You know you used always to confide your little troubles to me.

ALF. I've nothing to say, except that I'm over head and ears in love with you.

TER. Now, first of all, you mustn't say "you"; it's too personal. Say "I'm over head and ears in love with Teresa !"

ALF. Well, so I am.

TER. Poor boy ! Well, I can quite understand it, for, with all her faults, she's far and away the nicest girl hereabouts. Now, look at it sensibly. If you, a plain young man, married a conspicuous beauty (for, after all's said and done, that's what it comes to), you would be under a perpetual disadvantage from sheer force of contrast ; and as for jealousy—well, I've known Teresa since she was quite a little girl, and, take my word for it, she would keep you on chronic tenterhooks. Now, if you married a thoroughly plain girl—like Elvino's niece Ultrice, for instance (ULTRICE *enters, and overhears what follows*), who couldn't possibly, under any circumstances, give you the least uneasiness on the score of her personal attractions—you might count on being as happy as two thoroughly unattractive little birds could reasonably expect to be.

ALF. Ultrice!—what do I want with Ultrice? She follows me everywhere. She worries my life out.

TER. Ultrice is quite a good sort of girl; and as to her personal appearance, why, you'd get used even to that in a couple of years!

(ULTRICE *comes forward.*)

QUARTETTE.—ULTRICE, TERESA, ALFREDO, *and afterwards* ELVINO.

ULT. Upon my word, miss!

TER. Oh, it's you, miss!
How d'ye do, miss?
Didn't know you
Overheard, miss!

ULT. Oh, you spiteful—

TER. (*curtseying*). How politeful!

ULT. One I owe you,
You tittling, tattling, reckless, rattling, twopenny-ha'penny parcel of vanity!

TER. High gentility, amiability, both combined with true humility!

ULT. You mischief-making, character-taking, clicking clacking bit of inanity!

TER. Play propriety, or society may suppose it's inebriety.

ALF. Now, ladies, pray you, listen to me.
Dicky-birds in their nests agree.
If they can do so, do so too.

TER. & ULT. What has it, pray, to do with you?

ULT. Dicky-birds don't, to gain their ends,
Depreciate their absent friends.

TER. Dicky-birds don't, whate'er they hear,
Forget that they are *ladies*, dear!

ALL THREE. Dickey-birds tweetle, tweetle, tweek,
Which may be silly, and does sound weak;
But dickey-birds don't, whate'er they hear,
Forget that they are *ladies*, dear!

Enter ELVINO.

EL. Now, pray you, attention! I've something to mention
That ought your approval to win—

ULT. (*interrupting*). And dicky-birds never, or rarely, endeavour—

EL. Now, ladies, a truce to this din!

TER. (*interrupting*). And dicky-birds don't—

EL. Be quiet!

TER. I won't!—

EL. My fortune's about to begin—
The Duke and Duchess (their quality such is)—
Themselves, and their kith and kin—

ULT. (*interrupting*). And dicky-birds try to—

TER. (*interrupting*). And you too—and I too—

EL. Are going to stop at the inn!

ALL THREE. What!

EL. They're going to stop at the inn!

ALL THREE. What!

EL. They're going to stop at the inn!

ULT. The Duke and Duchess fall into our clutches?
A penance, no doubt, for some sin!

TER. Perhaps it's his figure, too portly for vigour,
He's stout, and he wants to be thin!

ALF. At least their intention shows great condescension,
For comfort they can't care a pin:
Indifferent eating—

ULT. Hard beds and damp sheeting—

TER. (I hope they've some Keating)—

ALL THREE. Afford a poor greeting
To people who stop at this inn!

ELVINO.	THE OTHERS.
For excellent eating,	Indifferent eating,
Good beds and warm sheeting,	Hard beds and damp sheeting
That never want Keating,	(I hope they've some Keating),
Afford a good greeting	Afford a poor greeting
To people who stop at my inn!	To people who stop at this inn

EL. I don't know how I shall accommodate them. My only bedroom is occupied by the exploded Alchemist, who is much too incomplete to be moved. There's the scullery. Do you think they'd put up with a shakedown in the scullery?

ALF. I don't know. The Duke is an awful stickler for etiquette.

ULT. He gave an innkeeper at Palermo six months because he used his pocket-handkerchief in his presence.

TER. And he fined the Mayor of Syracuse a hundred crowns because he didn't.

El. This is terrible. I know I shall make some fearful mistake with these people! I've never in my life addressed anybody of higher rank than an Oil and Italian Warehouseman!

Alf. My good sir, they're not people—they're Personages.

El. Of course they are! There I go—putting my foot into it at the first go off! If I could only practise a little! Now, if you'd be so kind—so very kind—as to impersonate the Duke, just for a dress rehearsal of the reception (I've got a lot of beautiful clothes left behind by some strolling players in pawn for their bill), you shall be treated with all the consideration due to your exalted rank, and have the entire run of the bar, except rum shrub!

Alf. It's a tempting offer. But I must have a Duchess.

El. Of course you must. (*Aside.*) How many Duchesses go to a Duke?

Alf. Only one at a time.

El. You don't say so?

Alf. Yes—Dukes are very particular about that.

El. Dear me! (*Aloud*) Well, here are two to choose from—my cousin Teresa and my niece Ultrice—both charming.

Ult. & Ter. What's that?

El. Well, one charming and one—umph! Will that do?

Ult. & Ter. That will do.

El. Now, come; we've no time to lose. Choose your Duchess and begin.

QUARTETTE.—Alfredo, Ultrice, Teresa, *and* Elvino.

Alf. (*to* Teresa). Fair maid, take pity on my state!
Look down with eyes compassionate
On my condition lonely;
Nor think me too impertinent,
If I implore you to relent,
And my sweet Duchess represent
On this occasion only!

Ter. I thank you, sir; but it would be
Presumptuous, indeed, in me
To personate a Duchess.
But I know one who'd have the face
To jump at mimicking her Grace;
No compliment seems out of place
Her vanity that touches.

Ult. D'you mean me, miss?

Ter. I mean you, miss,
All above.

Ult. You're too free, miss.

TER. Try it, do, miss—
There's a love!

ULT. I agree, miss!

TER. That's explicit:
Take your ground!

ULT. You shall see, miss.

TER. Wouldn't miss it
For a pound!

ULT. Though your spite all bounds surpasses,
Pay attention, I beseech you.
Manners of the upper classes
I shall be most pleased to teach you.

TER. Thank you, dear—pray, take your station—
Malice soon will spread the rumour.
It will be a personation
Teeming with unconscious humour!

ENSEMBLE.

ULTRICE.

Watch me as I take my station,
Spread abroad the welcome rumour.
No attempt at provocation
Touches my extreme good humour.

ALFREDO, TERESA, & ELVINO.

Watch her as she takes her station,
Malice soon will spread the rumour.
It will be a personation
Teeming with unconscious humour.

ULT. Now, look at me,
And you will see
How ladies grand
Present their hand;
It's copied from the highest ladies in the land.

TER. I always thought
A lady ought
To walk with grace
And not grimace;
But that, it's very evident, is not the case.

ULT. Then as they walk,
They blandly talk,
And look at us
With eye-glass—thus—
And what they'll have for dinner they, perhaps, discuss.

TER. It would appear
They flout and fleer,
Stick up their nose,
Turn in their toes—
You're teaching me gratuitously, I suppose?

ULT. Then as she takes her place upon the throne that is prepared,
The people bow them to the ground, and every head is bared,
They keep their proper places as she looks them through and through—

TER. And I suppose they try to keep their countenances too?
If that is what is called Court etiquette, it's very plain
The ways of high society I never shall attain;
It seems you must be ill-bred, and as awkward as can be,
Which is A, B, C to you, my love, but difficult for me.

[*Exeunt* ELVINO *bowing before* ALFREDO *and* ULTRICE, TERESA *following and mimicking* ULTRICE'S *walk and gestures.*

(*Charivari without. Enter Chorus of Girls running and heralding the approach of* PIETRO, BARTOLO, *and* NITA. PIETRO *is driving a Palermo donkey-cart.* BARTOLO *is dressed as a clown*, NITA *as a rope-dancer.* BARTOLO *carries a big drum and Pandean pipes.*)

CHORUS OF GIRLS.

Tabor and drum!
Mummers have come!
Hey for their mummery,
Frolic and flummery!
For to my dull
Countrified skull
Nothing sublunary
Equals buffoonery!
Folk of our kind
Frequently find
Jokes that are sensible
Incomprehensible.
Here, I admit,
Genuine wit,
As a commodity,
Ranks below oddity.

SOLO (PIETRO) *and* CHORUS.

Come, strike up, Mr. Merriman, while I inform the universe,
In metrical and tuny verse—

BAR. In metrical and tuny verse—

PIE. That here's an exhibition that's highly intellectual—
To see it we expect you all—

BAR. To see it we expect you all.

PIE. Come, empty all your pockets, for I'm not a common mountebank,
I've money in the County Bank—

BAR. He's money in the County Bank.

PIE. And I can give you value for your coppers insignificant—
And I'll return 'em *if* I can't—

BAR. And he'll return 'em *if* he can't.

SONG.—BARTOLO.

Though I'm a buffoon, recollect
I command your respect!
I cannot for money
Be vulgarly funny,
My object's to make you reflect!

True humour's a matter in which
I'm exceedingly rich.
It ought to delight you,
Although, at first sight, you
May not recognize it as sich.

Other clowns make you laugh till you sink,
When they tip you a wink;
With attitude antic,
They render you frantic—
I don't. I compel you *to think!*

For oh this is a world of insincerity and trouble,
And joy is imbecility, and happiness a bubble,
And you're a lot of butterflies who flutter through a summer,
And he's a mountebank, and I'm a miserable mummer!

ALL. It's possible the world is insincerity and trouble,
And happiness, for all I know, is nothing but a bubble;
Perhaps we may be butterflies who flutter through a summer,
But you're, without a doubt, a *very* miserable mummer!

NITA (*dancing*). I've a dance
That came from France
Not long ago—
It's worthy of your silver and your copper.
It's my own,
And I alone
It's mazes know—
It's graceful and particularly proper.
I assist
As soloist,
Upon a squeeze,
On the trumpet and the kettledrum sonorous.
I've a song
That's just as long
As you may please—
Twenty verses, and each verse has got a chorus!

ALL. Now that's the kind of merriment you ought to set before us;
Only fancy—twenty verses, and each verse has got a chorus.
To such an entertainment we could listen for a summer;
But save us from the humour of this melancholy mummer!

PIE. Oh, you lucky people! Oh, you fortunate villagers! A perfectly remote and altogether obscure corner of Europe favoured with the presence of a company of artists whom all the crowned heads of Europe are quarrelling to possess! (*To* BARTOLO) Solo, if you please, expressive of a general withdrawal of ambassadors from all the European Courts. (*Flourish.*) The Czar of Russia is no longer on terms with the Empress of New York because I visited her first. A lady you know! As a man of gallantry I couldn't refuse. But mum! I must be discreet. (*To* BARTOLO) Solo, if you please, expressive of the honourable silence of a self-respecting man of gallantry. (BARTOLO *flourishes his drum-sticks and pretends to play Pandean pipes, but without eliciting any sound.*) Now, what do you think we come for?

ALL. Gold!

PIE. Gold? Bah! Try again.

ALL. Silver!

PIE. Silver? Why, we're sick of gold and silver!

BAR. Could you oblige me with my last week's salary?

PIE. Gold! (*taking a handful from his pocket and looking at it in disgust*) Ugh! (*shuddering*). Here—catch (*about to throw it to them*). Stop! On second thoughts it will only give you ideas above your station. But, come—I will be frank with you. The greatest men have their weaknesses, and I have mine. I have been cursed through life with a morbid craving for copper! I was cradled in a copper. I have frequently been taken up by a copper. A bull once tossed me for a copper. "Heads!" I cried. I came down tails, and he won. I was hurt. I felt it very much. (*To* BARTOLO) Solo, if you please, expressive of feelings that may be more easily imagined than described. (*Flourish.*) Now to business. At half-past three will be presented a dress rehearsal of the performance to be given before the Duke and Duchess of Pallavicini, comprising an exhibition of conjuring, necromancy, spirit manifestations, thought reading, hypnotism, mesmeric psychology, psychography, sensory hallucination, dancing on the slack wire and ground and lofty tumbling. Also will be exhibited the two world-renowned life-size clockwork automata, representing Hamlet and Ophelia (*unrolling two posters representing the figures*) as they appeared in the bosoms of their families before they disgraced their friends by taking to the stage for a livelihood. The price of admission will be one penny for the aristocracy, members of the upper middle classes half price. At half-past five. Be in time—be in time—be in time! (*During this*

speech PIETRO *has frequently refreshed himself from a large wine-skin, which is also referred to by* BARTOLO *when* PIETRO *is not looking.*)

CHORUS. Now that's the sort of merriment you ought to set before us;
To mark our approbation we'll extemporize a chorus.
To such an entertainment we could listen for a summer;
But save us from the humour of that melancholy mummer!

[*Exeunt Village Girls.*

PIE. Humph! Not a remunerative lot, I fancy. But if the Duke, who is a mad enthusiast in the matter of automata, should take a fancy to our Hamlet and Ophelia, he'll buy them, and our fortune's made! By-the-bye, where's Beppo with the figures?

NI. Bless you, he couldn't be here yet—all uphill.

PIE. True. Nita!

NI. Well. (*She is talking to* BARTOLO.)

PIE. Not quite so near Bartolo, please.

NI. Oh, I forgot—force of habit.

PIE. You must recollect that you are no longer engaged to be married to him. That's over. You are engaged to be married to *me*, now. Try and remember it—*were* to him, *are* to me. It's quite easy, if you put it like that. Thank you (*leads donkey off*).

NI. Yes, but it's *not* so easy. A girl who's been deeply in love with a gentleman for the last six months may be forgiven if she forgets, now and then, that she doesn't care a bit for him any more.

BAR. (*gloomily*). We were happy!

NI. Very! (*sighing*).

BAR. How we carried on!

NI. Didn't we!

BAR. Do you remember when I used to go like *that* to you?

NI. Don't I! (*sighing*).

BAR. Does *he* ever go like that to you?

NI. Not he—he doesn't know how.

BAR. And yet we have a School Board! How you loved me!

NI. Yes; but when I loved you you told me you were a leading tragedian. But a clown—I really don't see how I *could* love a clown.

BAR. I didn't deceive you. I've played the first acts—and the first alone—of all our tragedies. No human eye has seen me in the second act of anything! My last appearance was three months agone. I played the moody Dane. As no one else had ever played him, so I played that Dane. Gods! how they laughed! I see them now—I hear their ribald roars. The whole house rocked with

laughter! I've a soul that cannot brook contempt. "Laugh on!" I said; "laugh on, and laugh your fill—you laugh your last! No man shall ever laugh at me again—I'll be a clown!" I kept my word —they laugh at me no more.

Enter BEPPO, *running and meeting* PIETRO.

BEP. (*breathless*). Oh, master! here's a misfortune—here's a calamity!

PIE. Eh? What's the matter? Where are the figures?

BEP. They're at Palermo!

PIE., BAR., & NI. What!

BEP. It's no fault of mine. They've been detained by the police because they hadn't any passports.

NI. That's because they're so life-like. After all, it's a compliment.

PIE. A compliment! Yes; but we can't dine on cold compliments. (*To* BEPPO.) Didn't you open the figures and show their clockwork insides?

BEP. Yes; but the police said that was no rule, they might be foreigners.

PIE. Very true—so they might.

BAR. Chock-full of eccentric wheels—might almost be English. What's to be done?

Enter ELVINO *and* ULTRICE

EL. Here's a mlsfortune!

ULT. Here's a calamity!

PIE. What, another?

EL. We're ruined—ruined!

BAR. What is the matter with the licensed victualler?

ULT. The Alchemist—it's all over— he's gone! The last explosion did it!

EL. And this (*producing halfpence*) is all I've been paid for six weeks' board, lodging, and medical attendance!

PIE. It seems cheap. But you can seize his effects.

EL. I've seized 'em! Here they are (*producing medicine phial with label*)—all he possessed in the world—a bottle of medicine with a label on it!

PIE. What's this?

EL. Read it—our education's is not what it was.

PIE. (*pretending to read label*). "Two tablespoonfuls, at bed-time."

EL. Is that all?

PIE. Here's a greedy fellow!

EL. But I say—it takes a lot of writing to say that.

PIE. Well, it's a very strong medicine.

EL. Oh, I see.

ULT. (*aside*). *I* don't.

PIE. (*returning it*). Take it.

EL. Thankye; take it yourself—it will do you good.

[*Exit* ELVINO, ULTRICE *remains listening unobserved*

PIE. (*changing his manners*). Has he gone? Come here; there's more in this than meets the eye!

NI. What, more than two tablespoons?

PIE. More than two fiddlesticks! Listen to this: (*reads*) "*Man is a hypocrite, and invariably affects to be better and wiser than he really is. This liquid, which should be freely diluted, has the effect of making every one who drinks it exactly what he pretends to be. The hypocrite becomes a man of piety; the swindler, a man of honour; the quack, a man of learning; and the braggart, a man of war.*"

ULT. (*aside*). I thought as much—this may be useful.

[*Exit* ULTRICE.

PIE. Now the question is—what's to be done with it?

NI. Give some to Bartolo, and make him funny!

BAR. Naughty sly-boots!

PIE. Give some to Bartolo? Yes, and give some to Nita, too. Don't you understand?

NI. Candidly, no.

PIE. Why, the Duke and Duchess want to buy the figures, and the figures are missing. What's to be done? Why, it's obvious. You and Bartolo dress and make up as the two figures—when dressed, you drink a few drops of the potion, diluted with wine (*tasting the cork and shuddering*). It's—it's not at all nasty—and you will not only look like the two figures, but you'll actually *be* the two figures—clockwork and all!

NI. Whew! (*whistles*).

BAR. What! I become a doll—a dandled doll? A mere conglomerate of whizzing wheels, salad of springs and hotch-potch of escapements? Exchange all the beautiful things I've got inside here for a handful of common clockwork? It's a large order. Perish the thought and he who uttered it!

PIE. Come, come! The figures are our joint property, and we are all equally interested in selling them.

NI. That's true. Well, I've no objection. Besides, it will be fun.

PIE. Good girl! The potion must be diluted, so I'll pour it into this wine-skin and we can draw it off as we want it (*does so*).

NI. But stop a bit. I don't want to be clockwork all my life! How are we to get back again?

PIE. I never thought of that!

NI. It wouldn't do at all.

PIE. Oh, not at all. Perhaps it says (*refers to label*). Yes! (*reads*). "*If the charm has been misapplied, matters can be restored to their original condition by burning this label.*" There you are—nothing could be simpler.

NI. I say—don't lose that.

PIE. Not if I know it (*puts it in his pocket-book, which he places in his pocket*). I shall be back in a minute, and, in the meantime, try and wheedle him into joining us. [*Exit* PIETRO.

BAR. (*who has been fuming in silence*). I protest! It is an indignity! I have a soul that cannot brook an indignity!

NI. An indignity? Nonsense — just think — you'll appear as Hamlet, your favourite character, before the Duke—complete dress —scene from the second act, too—

BAR. Ha!

NI. I shall be desperately in love with you—and you with me—we shall bill, and we shall coo, and we shall be as happy as two little birds.

BAR. Can clockwork coo? A nice point.

NI. Ah! There *was* a time when you wouldn't refuse me anything.

BAR. Yes, but then you used to coax me. I have a soul that can do nothing unless it's coaxed.

NI. Then sit down, and I'll coax you.

BAR. Coax me hard.

NI. Oh, very hard! (*business*).

BAR. Oh, coax me harder than that!

NI. Will *that* do? (*business*).

BAR. That sort of thing, prolonged indefinitely, will do.

(*During this*, PIETRO *has been occupied in hanging up the posters on each side of the Inn door. Exit* PIETRO *into Inn.*)

SONG.—NITA.

Those days of old
How mad were we
To banish!
Thy love was told,
Querido mi,
In Spanish—

And timid I,
A-flush with shame
Elysian,
Could only sigh,
Dieu, comme je t'aime!
(Parisian).

No matter, e'en
Hadst thou been coined
A Merman,
Thou wouldst have been
Mein lieber freund—
(That's German).
Thy face, a-blaze
With loving pats
Felt tinglish,
For in those days
I loved thee—that's
Plain English!

(*During this*, BARTOLO *has gradually yielded to* NITA'S *blandishments, and at the end expresses, in gesture, his acquiescence with her wishes.* PIETRO *re-enters from Inn.*)

DANCING TRIO.—PIETRO, NITA, *and* BARTOLO.

PIE. (*enters, dancing*). Allow that the plan I devise
Is new and sufficiently clever
To testify joy and surprise,
Perhaps you will kindly endeavour?

BAR. & NITA (*dancing*). With anything clever or wise,
I never should credit you—never.
To testify joy and surprise,
Observe our united endeavour.
(*Dance*—NITA *stops suddenly.*)

NITA. But what a catastrophe! Stop!
(BARTOLO *and* PIETRO *stop dancing*).
I see of objections a crop.
Suppose, by some horrible fluke,
I should chance to be bought by the Duke!

PIE. (*resuming his dance*). Be easy, I'll certainly see
You'll never get into his clutches.

BAR. (*dancing*). But don't be alarmed about me—
I should like to be bought by the Duchess!
I have certain society touches
That ought to appeal to a Duchess.
Though pride I abhor,
I've a "jenny say quor"
That is sure to appeal to a Duchess!

ALL. But don't be alarmed about {me, / he,} &c.

[*Dance, and dance off.*

Enter TERESA.

TER. There's absolutely no limit to the vanity of some people. Ultrice actually believes that she has captivated Alfredo! Ha! ha! ha! Well, I'll let her remain under that fond delusion a little longer —it amuses me. When I'm tired of it, I have only to hold up my little finger and he'll fling himself at my feet in a moment!

BALLAD.—TERESA.

When man in love-sick passion lingers,
A maid can twist him round her fingers:
A word from me
Of eloquent,
Yet maidenly
Encouragement—
A faint recall—
A dainty hint
That, after all,
I'm not a flint—
And such permissible pretences
Will put to flight his seven senses.
Then, as he cries, "My own, for ever!
No power on earth our lives shall sever!"
I'll answer him, with laugh provoking,
"Upon my word,
You're too absurd!
Why, bless my heart, I'm only joking!
Ha! ha! ha! ha!
I'm only joking!"

Enter ALFREDO *unperceived. He overhears the following verse.*

And should that fail—it doesn't often—
His heart by other means I'll soften:
With eyes that stream,
And tears that sob
In joy supreme,
I'll make it throb—
I'll vow his scorn
My heart will break,
And all forlorn
For his sweet sake—
Which more than life itself I cherish—
I'll constant live and constant perish!
Then, as he cries, "My dearest treasure,
Adored beyond all earthly measure!"

I'll answer him (my triumph cloaking),
"Upon my word,
You're too absurd—
Get up, you goose, I'm only joking!
Ha! ha! ha! ha!
I'm only joking!"

ALF. (*coming forward—recitative*). Ah, cruel one!

TER. Alfredo!

ALF. Madam, good morning! (*going*).

DUET.—TERESA *and* ALFREDO.

TER. Oh, whither, whither, whither do you speed you?
Oh, hither, hither, hither, hither hie?

ALF. Another—nother—nother time I'll heed you,
I've other, other, other fish to fry.

ENSEMBLE.

ALFREDO (*aside*).	TERESA (*aside*).
To punish her I'll try, I'll soften by-and-bye. (*Aloud*) My lady, I am sorry, but I've other fish to fry!	There's a twinkle in his eye, He'll soften bye-and-bye. (*Aloud*) I'm very, very sorry that you've other fish to fry.

TER. A merry, merry, merry maid invites you,
Who's very, very, very short of sense.

ALF. Its flirti-flirti-flirtiness incites you,
Imperti-perti-perti-pertinence!

ENSEMBLE.

ALFREDO (*aside*).	TERESA (*aside*).
Of taking some offence, I'm making a pretence, I'll punish her imperti-perti-perti- pertinence!	He thinks me very dense, I see through his pretence, (*Aloud*) Oh, pardon my imperti- perti-perti-pertinence!

TER. Now, listen to me, dear,
'Twas waywardness wilful
(In which, as you see, dear,
I'm not very skilful)
That makes you so tearful;
Take heart, and be cheerful,
No mischief is done, dear—
I was only in fun, dear!

ALF. Now, listen to me, love—
My sentiments store them ;
When maidens like thee, love,
On hearts that adore them
Unfeelingly trample,
They always give ample
Occasion for scorning—
I bid you good morning !

TER. I was only in fun, dear !

ALF. I pray you take warning.

TER. No mischief is done, dear !

ALF. I bid you good morning !

ENSEMBLE.

ALF. (*aside*).	TER. (*furiously.*)
She was only in fun—	I was only in fun,
No mischief is done ;	But the mischief done ;
Of taking offence	Of taking offence
I am making pretence.	It is not a pretence.
(*Aloud.*) I bid you good morning !	For he bids me good morning !

[*Exit* ALFREDO.

RECIT.—TERESA.

Despised ! Rejected ! Do I wake or dream ?
By him rejected ? Oh the shame of it !
Rather than this I'll overwhelm him with
The torrent of my passion—make him think
My brain is tottering for the love of him ;
And when at last he yields to my protesting,
I'll say, "Ha ! ha ! poor fool—I was but jesting !" [*Exit.*

Flourish. Enter Chorus of Girls, running.

CHORUS.

Come and take your places all,
The show is just beginning ;
Don't you hear the trumpet's call,
And the drummer's dinning ?
Frolic, fun, and flummery—
Magic, mirth, and mummery—
(That's the showman's summary)
Set us all a-grinning !

(*During this* ALFREDO *has returned, followed* by TERESA, *who expresses heart-broken passion in gesture.*)

Enter ULTRICE *and* ELVINO, *who carries a theatrical cloak, sword, hat, and lady's train.*

ULT. (*recit.*) Allow me, madam, if you have quite done with him.

ALF. (*leaving* TERESA). Good morning, miss!

TER. (*enraged—aside*). Oh, some day I'll be one with him!
[*Exit* TERESA.

EL. (*to* ALF.). Allow me. 'Twill assist your Grace
If on your noble brow I place
This hat and feather. (ALFREDO *puts them on.*)

(*To* ULT.). The Duchess, perhaps, will kindly deign
To wear these jewels and this train—
They go together. (ULTRICE *puts them on.*)

(ALFREDO *and* ULTRICE *walk pompously to seats that are placed for them in front of the Inn door, the Chorus curtseying with mock humility.*)

CHORUS. Your Graces, as you wend,
We humbly bow and bend.
You look, we're quite aware,
A most imposing pair!
Ha! ha! ha! ha!

(*Enter procession of Tamorras, disguised as Dominican monks:* ARROSTINO *as prior.*)

CHAUNT.

(*The Girls, believing the Monks to be genuine, all kneel.*)

MOCK MONKS. Attamen ex cunctis supra reliquisque notandum—

ARR. Omne quod exit in um (hoc berba, I don't understand 'em).

MOCK MONKS. Esse genus neutrium—sic invariabile nomen—

ARR. (Which is Greek to most of us here, and perhaps Double-Dutch to the showmen.)

(*The Tamorras throw off their hoods and reveal themselves.*)

TAMORRAS. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

CHORUS OF GIRLS.

Oh, you wicked,
Base—deceiving—
It's distressing!
It's degrading!

We are tricked
Through believing,
Never guessing
Masquerading!

Friars mocking!
Goodness gracious;
What a wrong, sir!
Why, how dare you?

It is shocking!
It's audacious!
Go along, sir!
I can't bear you!

MEN. It is wicked—ha! ha! ha!
They are trickèd—ha! ha! ha!

ALL. This disguising
Is surprising,
Friars mocking,
It is shocking—
It is blameful—
It is shameful—
It is shameful—
Ha! ha! ha!

Enter MINESTRA, *disguised as a very old woman.*

MIN. Come and listen, pretty ladies—
Cross my hand with maravedis—
For to prophesy my trade is,
And my prophecies are sound.

Fear no trick or double-dealing
I am clever at revealing,
Neither good nor ill concealing.
So, my pretties, gather round.

(*The Girls gather round her to have their fortunes told.* MINESTRA *throws off her hood and reveals herself.*)

ALL. {They / We} are trickèd—ha! ha! ha!
It is wicked—ha! ha! ha!
This disguising
Is surprising:
Ladies mocking!
Conduct shocking!
It is blameful—
It is shameful—
It is blameful—ha! ha! ha!

(*During the above* PIETRO *has brought on* BARTOLO *and* NITA *made up as wax-work figures of Hamlet and Ophelia.*)

SOLO—Pietro.

Now, all you pretty villagers who haven't paid, stand *you* aside
And listen to a tragic tale of love, despair, and suicide.
The gentleman's a noble prince—a marvel of ventriloquy—
Unhappily afflicted with a mania for soliloquy.
The lady is the victim of the God of Love tyrannical—
You see it in her gestures, which are morbidly mechanical;
He's backed himself at heavy odds, in proof of his ability
That he'll soliloquize her into utter imbecility.
She wildly begs him to desist—appeals to his humanity,
But all in vain—observe her eyes a-goggling with insanity.
He perseveres, improving the occasion opportunatic—
She sticks straws in her hair—he's won his wager—she's a lunatic!

(*During this*, Bartolo *and* Nita *have gone through the movements described in a ridiculously jerky and mechanical fashion.*)

ENSEMBLE.

CHORUS—Teresa *and* Ultrice.

Chorus.

Astonishing,
What science can contrive!
In everything
You'd think they were alive.
Her lovely face—
Her eloquent despair!
His princely grace,
His beautiful back hair!

Ter. (*to* Alf.)

To thee I cling
To gain thy love I strive;
My heart you wring,
I shall not long survive!

Ult.

From his embrace
Thyself directly tear,
Or I'll deface
Thy beautiful back hair!

Alf. Appreciation of such skill
Should not be shown by stealth.
In bumpers round (I'll pay the bill),
We'll drink the showman's health.
(*Taking up wine-skin which* Pietro *left at entrance to Inn.*)
This wine-skin I devote to you,
We'll drink it till it's dry.
I'm sure that's what the Duke would do,
Were he as pleased as I!

All. Hurrah!
I'm sure that's what the Duke would do,
Were he as pleased as I!

PIE. (*horrified*). Beware!
That wine is mine,
You must not drink it

ALF. Forbear!
I pay my way;
You may not think it!
(*Gives money to* PIETRO.)

PIETRO. Take care!
The wine is poisoned, on my word rely,
And he who drinks in agony will die!
Commencing with a gentle pain
Scarce worth a question,
It grows apace, till you complain
Of indigestion.
Then follows an internal fire
That scorns emulsions,
Until, ere nightfall, you expire
In fierce convulsions!

ALL. Ha! ha!
An idle tale we think it!
Ho! ho!
We saw you freely drink it!

(*During this* ALFREDO *has filled a number of goblets with wine from the wine-skin, and handed them round to* ARROSTINO *and the Male Chorus.*)

ALF. It can't be worse than 'Vino's wine accurst —
If we're to die of it, be thou the first!

(*Draws sword and offers cup to* PIETRO. *During this the two figures express galvanic agitation.*)

PIE. I can't obey you!

ALL. Drink

ALF. Come, why delay you?

ALL. Drink!

PIE. I beg—I pray you!

ALL. Drink!

ALF. Quick, or I'll slay you!

ALL. Drink!

(*During this* ELVINO *has poured the wine down* PIETRO'S *throat.* PIETRO *immediately begins to feel the effect of the wine, which he described as poison, and which has become poison to him.*)

ALF. Oh ye who are weary of life,
Don't trifle with pistol and knife—
This potion is far from amiss;
If you've ducats of gold in your purse,
Why, then, you may surely do worse
Than die of such poison as this!

CHORUS. Oh ye who are weary of life, &c.

During this, TERESA *has pretended to fall insensible at* ALFREDO'S) *feet. He supports her, and supposing that she has fainted, pours some of the wine down her throat. All the others* (*except the chorus of girls*) *raise the cups to their lips, and drink as the Act Drop falls.*)

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Exterior of Monastery by moonlight. Mountain range and river in distance.*

RISOTTO *discovered.*

RIS. (*looking at watch*). Now, Minestra, where are you? This is the appointed spot, and you are not here. Dear, dear, dear! She never kept me waiting before (*looking off*). Ah, I see her! Here she comes, toddling along like an old lady of eighty! What a thorough little artist it is! She keeps up the character even when she thinks no one is looking! (*Enter* MINESTRA, *now really transformed into an old crone.*) My darling, you're late. Why—what a wonderful disguise! I never saw anything more perfect in my life! I can hardly believe that this is my pretty, dainty, delicate, little bride!

MIN. Oh, Risotto, don't be angry with your little wifey, but something terrible has happened—I—I can't get it off!

RIS. Can't get what off, my pet?

MIN. The make-up! I lined my face, just as you told me—and —and now they're real wrinkles!

RIS. (*examining her face*). What!

MIN. Then you told me to cover my teeth with cobbler's wax, They've all come out! Then you told me to pretend I had gout and rheumatism—and I've got 'em! Ugh! (*groaning*).

RIS. But, my dearest girl—

MIN. Then my hair! Oh, my poor hair!

RIS. It's a capital wig.

MIN. That's it—it's not a wig! It's my own, and it won't come off—and I hate it!

RIS. This is a most remarkable circumstance. How did it happen?

MIN. After I had dressed myself as an old woman we all drank some wine out of the conjuror's wine-skin, and I gradually became an old lady of seventy-four!

RIS. This is most embarrassing. I may say, most disappointing. On one's wedding-day, too!

MIN. My poor husband, I'm so sorry for you! But I'm an old woman, and you won't be troubled with me long; that's one comfort for you.

RIS. Yes—I mean, no. I—I trust that, notwithstanding this—this modification of the implied terms of our agreement—there are many years of—of—yes, bliss—in store for us. (*Aside*) If it had only happened yesterday, it wouldn't have mattered so much!

MIN. Of course, you won't love your little woman now!

RIS. Oh, I beg your pardon. I shall have much pleasure in—in showing you every attention compatible with the—the respect due to a lady of your advanced years, my—my pet!

DUET.—RISOTTO *and* MINESTRA.

MIN. I'd be a young girl if I could!

RIS. You're very good—you're very good;
But that unlikely I'm afraid is!

MIN. I'd be as lovely as the rose!

RIS. So I suppose—so I suppose.
And so, no doubt, would most old ladies!

MIN. I'll rouge my face, make up my eyes,
With cunning dyes—with cunning dyes—
My venerable looks anointing.
I'll try my best your heart to thrill.

RIS. I'm sure you will, my love, but still
It *is* a little disappointing!
It *is* a little—

MIN. Just a little—

RIS. Yes, a little—

BOTH. Little—little disappointing!

RIS. You're certain that you're wide awake?
There's no mistake—there's no mistake?
Your rugged wrinkles you can't thin off?

MIN. I've scrubbed, and scrubbed, and scrubbed away
For half a day, for half a day,
Until I've almost scrubbed the skin off!
So gouty and rheumatic I
That though I try, that though I try,
I scarce can fasten my shoe-buckles

RIS. (*looking at her fingers*). My bride could write (so gouty she)
"No Popery! No Popery!"
On all the walls with all her knuckles!
It is a little—

MIN. Just a little—

RIS. Yes, a little—

BOTH. Little—little disappointing!

[*Exit* RISOTTO, *slowly and despondingly.*

MIN. It's a sad thing to be transformed into an old woman in the very flower of one's life! Ah, deary me! this is but a dismal wedding day! Why, who comes here? Teresa, as I live—and crying too! What has *she* to cry for? She's young enough, *I'm* sure!

Enter TERESA. (*Her manner suggests that she is crazed.*)

RECIT. *and* SONG.—TERESA.

All alone to my eerie I wander aweary,
A desolate maid of her lover bereft;
What matter? 'tis only a heart that is lonely—
A-many the maids that a lover has left!

BALLAD.

Whispering breeze,
Bring me my dear!
Wind-shaken trees,
Beckon him here!
Rivulet, hie—
Prithee go see—
Birds, as ye fly,
Call him to me!
Tell him the tale of the tears that I shed—
Tell him I die for the love that is dead!

Heart that in jest
Laughed him to scorn,
Now in my breast
Lying forlorn—
Idle to plead!
Cherish thy chain—
Thou shall be freed
Never again!
My heart it is sad and a-weary my head,
For I weep and I die for the love that is dead!

[*She sinks, weeping, on a seat.*

MIN. Why, take heart, little one! What ails thee? Come, tell me thy sorrow. I'm an old body now, but time was when I was as young as thou art—and not so long since, either!

TER. Oh, mother, mother, I think I am bewitched!

MIN. (*aside*). Here's another!

TER. I am as though in a dream! Shall I tell thee? Yes, for thou hast a kindly old face. To serve an unworthy end I must needs feign to be going mad for the love of Alfredo, and so feigning I fell at his feet. He, thinking I had swooned in good sooth, placed a wine-cup to my lips, and I drank, and oh, mother, it must have been some love-philtre, for, behold, a wondrous change came over me, and he who was naught to me before became as the very breath of my life!

MIN. Well, the potion has done thee good service, for he's a good lad, and will make thee a strapping husband.

TER. Nay, herein is the mischief of it—it was too late, for he had already given his heart to another, and would none of me, and I, whose very soul is possessed by my love of him, have retained the village fiddler to compose crazy love-songs for me to sing when occasion ariseth, for I am going mad—mad—mad—and be a girl never so crazy, her songs should be in accordance with the rules of thorough-bass.

MIN. Ha! Now, mark me—that mountebanking fellow is at the bottom of this. Why, he hath also bewitched *me!*

TER. Thou? *Thou* lovest not Alfredo?

MIN. A fig for Alfredo! Why, look at me, child; I am Minestra!

TER. (*looking at her*). Thou Minestra, who was married this morning? Nay, I am mad; but not so mad as that! Minestra is young and rather pretty—not so pretty as I, but still pretty—whereas thou art—oh! I ask pardon—my brain wanders—wanders—wanders!

MIN. I am Minestra, I tell thee. For a purpose—also an unworthy one—I feigned to be an old dame, and so feigning, I drank—and, hang the knave, I am seventy!

TER. Thou Minestra? Why, let me look! As I live, it is true! Oh, poor, poor Risotto!

MIN. Even so; thy pity is for him—not for me. No matter. But if I can find this Jack-pudding, trust me, I'll make him set matters straight again. Oh, I have as much to regain as thou!

DUET.—MINESTRA *and* TERESA.

MIN. If I can catch this jolly Jack-Patch—

TER. Ah, me! my heart is weary, oh!

MIN. He'll go for a year with a flea in his ear!

TER. And my days are dark and dreary, oh!

MIN. He'll find his joke is a pig in a poke—

TER. For love my soul is aching, oh!

MIN. Though scarce a score, I'm seventy-four!—

TER. And my heart, my heart is breaking, oh!

MIN. When a woman has come to seventy year
It's well to be withered and old and blear;
But when she is only a score like me,
It's better a fair young girl to be!

TER. 'Tis well to be young when all is well,
And lovers are true to the tales they tell;
But ah! when love is a upas tree,
'Tis better an aged dame to be!

[*Exeunt together.*

Symphony. Enter BARTOLO *and* NITA (*still as waxwork Hamlet and Ophelia*). *They walk down the stage mechanically, as though controlled by clockwork. Their keys are fitted with keyholes in the small of their backs. Each wears a placard inscribed "Put a penny in the slot."*

DUET—BARTOLO *and* NITA.

BAR. If our action's stiff and crude,
Do not laugh because it's rude.

NI. If our gestures promise larks,
Do not make unkind remarks.

BAR. Clockwork figures may be found
Everywhere and all around.

NI. Ten to one, if we but knew,
You are clockwork figures too.

BAR. And the motto of the lot,

NI. "Put a penny in the slot!"

NI. Usurer, for money lent,
Making out his cent. per cent.—

BAR. Widow plump or maiden rare,
Deaf and dumb to suitor's prayer—

NI. Tax collectors, whom in vain
You implore to "call again"—

BAR. Cautious voter, whom you find
Slow in making up his mind.

NI. If you'd move them on the spot,

BAR. Put a penny in the slot!

BAR. Bland reporters in the courts,
Who suppress police reports—

NI. Sheriff's yeoman, pen in fist,
Making out a jury list—

BAR. Stern policemen, tall and spare,
Acting all "upon the square"—

NI. (Which in words that plainer fall,
Means that you can square them all)—

BAR. If you want to move the lot,

NI. Put a penny in the slot!

BAR. Nita.

NI. Well?

BAR. This is a very uncomfortable state of things.

NI. Very. How do you find your clockwork this evening?

BAR. Ticking, ticking, thank you. And you?

NI. I fancy I want regulating.

BAR. Eh?

NI. I think I'm rather fast.

BAR. Nita, you surprise and shock me.

NI. Mechanically speaking, I mean.

BAR. Oh, I take you. This condition of existence is rather degrading. We are quite common clockwork, I believe?

NI. Mere Geneva. The cheapest thing in the trade.

BAR. So I was given to understand.

NI. It might have been worse. We might have been Waterbury, with interchangeable insides.

BAR. That's true. But when I remember the delicately-beautiful apparatus with which I was filled from head to foot—and which never, never ticked—when I contemplate the exquisite adjustment of means to end—which never, never wanted oiling—I am shocked to think that I am reduced to a mere mechanical complication of arbors, pallets, wheels, mainsprings, and escapements!

NI. Still, you were always complaining. You never were quite well.

BAR. Because I eat too much.

NI. That's true.

BAR. Never weary of putting into operation the exquisitely-beautiful apparatus of digestion, I over-taxed its powers. I was a scientific enthusiast, and I over-did it. Still, it is something to have an apparatus that never, never aches. I—I—hallo!

NI. What's the matter?

BAR. (*very slowly*). I—beg your pardon. I—think—I—must be running down. May—I—trouble you? They've—thoughtlessly—put the key-hole—in—the—small of my back—and—I—can't get at it. (NITA *winds him up.*) Thank you. That's very nice, indeed. Now I can go on again. Hallo! c'ck! c'ck! c'ck!

NI. What's wrong now?

BAR. I—c'ck—c'ck—I am not conversant with clockwork; but do you feel, from time to time, a kind of jerkiness that catches you just *here?*

NI. No; I work as smooth as butter. The continued ticking is tiresome; but it's only for an hour.

BAR. The ticking is simply maddening. C'ck! c'ck! There it is again!

NI. Something wrong with your works, I'm afraid. Stop a bit—I'll see. (*Opens door in chest, revealing a quantity of clockwork.*) No; all right there. Turn round. (*He does so; she opens door in the back of his head.*) No; the head appears to be empty. (*Opens door in his side.*) I see what it is; a halfpenny has got into your escapement Stop a bit! (*Takes out halfpenny.*)

BAR. Bless my heart, how dangerous! What a relief! Thank you very much. You may keep it for your trouble; but do not—oh, do not spend it in foolishness.

NI. While I'm about it, I'll just oil you, and then— (*proceeds to oil his works with a feather*).

BAR. (*squirming*). Don't! You tickle!

Enter PIETRO, *looking very ill.*

PIE. (*not seeing them*). The Duke and Duchess will be here in half-an-hour—their escort is already in sight. Dying by slow poison is a very painful process, and I couldn't have held out much longer. (*Sees them.*) Nita! what are you doing?

NI. I'm oiling Bartolo.

BAR. I am being oiled by Nita, and she *does* tickle! I don't like it. At least I do like it, but it's wrong.

PIE. How dare you take such a liberty! Shut the gentleman up at once. Nice occupation for a young lady!

NI. But there's something wrong with his works.

PIE. That's no affair of yours. If Bartolo's works are out of order, that is a matter for Bartolo's medical attendant—I mean his clockmaker. Don't let me catch you oiling him again.

NI. Ha! ha! ha!

PIE. If this occurs again, I'll take both your keys away—upon my word I will!

TRIO.—BARTOLO, NITA, *and* PIETRO.

BAR. When gentlemen are eaten up with jealousy,
They make themselves exceedingly ridiculous,
For everything around they tinted yellow see—
Their antics and extravagances tickle us.
Their antics and extravagances
Tic-tic, tic-tic, tic-tic, tic-tic—
They tic-tic, tic-tic, tickle us!

ALL. They tic-tic, &c.

NI. Here's a gentleman, as fierce as a Mahometan,
So carried off by jealousy vehicular,
He's down on an unfortunate Automaton:
Some people are so terribly particular!
Some people are too terribly
Partic-tic, tic-tic, tic-tic, tic-tic—
Partic-tic, tic-tic, ticular!

ALL. Partic-tic, tic-tic, &c.

PIE. When a lady is disposed to be tyrannical,
She's equal to unlimited iniquity;
And flirting may be flirting, though mechanical—
A fact that has the sanction of antiquity—
Antic-tic, tic-tic, tic-tic, tic-tic—
Antic-tic, tic-tic, tiquity!

ALL. Antic-tic, &c.

[*Exeunt* NITA *and* BARTOLO *at opposite entrances, walking mechanically to symphony.* PIETRO *accompanying* NITA.

Enter from monastery a procession of Tamorras (now transformed into Dominican Monks) chaunting from black-letter volumes; ARROSTINO *as the Prior.*

CHAUNT.

Time there was when earthly joy
Gave our senses full employ;
In those days, for ever gone,
Bless us, how we carried on!
Clinking glasses—
Lovely lasses—
Rebel hearty—
Pic-nic party—
Gay donzella—
Tarantella!
In those days, for ever gone,
Bless us, how we carried on!

(*Confidentially to audience*).

It's a most unaccountable thing—
An hour ago, as banditti,
We played like young lovers in spring,
The mischief in village and city;
But since we got merry and mellow
On the wine of that conjuring fellow,
Transmogrified we're
Into friars austere,
Unwashed and unpleasantly yellow!
Whatever you say or you sing,
It's a most unaccountable thing!

Enter Chorus of Girls, from various directions.

CHORUS OF GIRLS.

After a weary search
Hiding, at last, we find you;
Leaving us in the lurch
Isn't good breeding, mind you.
Offer apologee—
We shall want some persuading;
When do you think you'll be
Tired of masquerading?

(*During this chorus, the Girls have been endeavouring to induce the Monks to pay them attentions. The Monks, however, have kept their eyes studiously on their books.*)

ARR. These blandishments I pray you curb,
Nor think us churls—nor think us churls;
Our pious calm do not disturb,
Now there's good girls—now there's good girls!
Though our emotions, as you see,
We try to freeze—we try to freeze!
We don't, as yet, pretend to be
St. Anthonies—St. Anthonies;
So go along—nor think us churls,
Now there's good girls—now there's good girls!

THE GIRLS. Ah, cruel ones!
Time was, your love was stronger!
Ah, cruel ones!
You love us then no longer!

MONKS. It's a most unaccountable thing—

(*confidingly, to Girls*). An hour ago, as banditti,
We played like young lovers in spring,
The mischief in village and city.
But since we got merry and mellow
On the wine of that conjuring fellow,
Transmogrified we're
Into friars austere,
Unwashed and unpleasantly yellow!

ALL. Whatever you say or sing,
It's a most unaccountable thing!

Enter PIETRO, *still very ill.*

ALL (*seeing him*). Ah!
What does this mean—what have you done?
Do not attempt away to run
Nor questions try to parry.
The men to whom { we / they } were betrothed,
{ We / They } find as holy friars clothed,
Who mustn't ever marry!
Who mustn't ever marry!

PIE. Now I'll explain,
(If calm you'll be)
As well as I can
Though I'm in pain
And ought to see
A medical man.

RECIT.—PIETRO.

My worthy friends, the wine you chose to drink
Makes every one what he pretends to be;
You personated monks, and monks you are,
And will be monks until the spell's removed.

ALL. Oh, horror!
Oh, horror and despair unprecedented!

GIRLS. But how long must they wait—to dreary cell,
To life-long celibacy sternly vowed?

MEN. Yes, say—how long?

PIE. Have patience, for I hold the antidote,
(*Producing pocket-book.*)
And in an hour or two, or thereabouts,
The spell shall be removed, and you may wed
As quickly and as often as you please!

ALL. Oh, rapture!
Oh, rapture, joy, and bliss unprecedented!

CHORUS OF GIRLS (*dancing*). An hour! 'twill rapidly pass,
Our freedom we then shall recover;
Each lover will welcome his lass—
Each lass will return to her lover!
The bells for our wedding will chime,
Delight in each bosom implanting,
So, gentlemen, in the meantime,
Proceed, if you please, with your chaunting!

ENSEMBLE.

MEN.
Earthly pleasures that allure,
For an hour we abjure, &c.

GIRLS.
An hour! 'twill rapidly pass,
Our freedom we then shall recover, &c.

(*Exeunt Girls. Manent* ARROSTINO, GIORGIO, LUIGI, *and Monks.*)

ARR. This is a remarkable change, my son. A great improvement on our recent condition. Devoted as we now are to a life of contemplation—restricted by the rules of our order to a diet of bread and herbs—and not much of that—indigestion and its attendant inconveniences will be matters of tradition.

LUI. Still, it must be admitted that the old life was a pleasant one!

ARR. Yes, we had a jolly time of it while it lasted—(*correcting himself*)—I should say that worldly allurements have the faculty of enlivening their devotees for the moment, but the evening's enjoyment seldom bears the morning's reflection, and the choicest banquet is but a feast of dead sea apples which turn to ashes in the mouth!

GIO. Under the circumstances, we might have spared ourselves the trouble of luring the Duke and Duchess to the monastery.

ARR. No—no, I think not. It is true that, having regard to our present condition, we are bound to receive our distinguished guests with scrupulous hospitality, but an hour will soon pass, and we shall then, unhappily, lapse once more into the deplorable condition of being able to avail ourselves of any small change their Highnesses may happen to have about them. It is dreadful to think of, but that's what we shall be in about an hour.

(LUIGI *ascends to balcony of monastery.*)

RECIT.

LUI. The Duke and Duchess hither wend their ways,
Shall we receive them with a song of praise?

ARR. With glad acclaim we'll make the welkin ring,
The only question is—what shall we sing?

CHORUS.

We know no song
That fits a throng
Of friars smug and greasy:
Our worldly lays
Of bygone days
Are much too free and easy;

Though suited to
A bandit crew,
They're not at all monastic,
And can't be sung
By sober tongue
Of mild ecclesiastic.

ARR. Stout-hearted be!
So many here
We need not fear
The ordeal before us;
No single word
Is ever heard
When singers sing in chorus.
So sing with me—

Enter ALFREDO, *dressed magnificently as the Duke, supporting* MINESTRA, *who is apparently insensible.*

ALL. La la la la la,
La la la, &c.

DUKE (*very impressively*) La la la la la,
La la la, &c.

(*The Monks are much impressed with* ALFREDO'S *reply, and express in gestures their satisfaction with the sentiments he has expressed.*)

ALL. La la la la, &c.

[*Exeunt all the Monks except* ARROSTINO, GIORGIO, *and* LUIGI.

ALF. (*to* ARROSTINO). May I ask if you are the Prior of this monastery?

ARR. Well, I am and I am not. That is, I am now, but I wasn't an hour ago.

ALF. I see—a recent appointment.

ARR. Yes, for an hour. Present tense, I am a Prior. Imperfect tense, I was a rollicking young rantipole. Future tense, I shall be a rollicking young rantipole—in an hour. I hope I make myself clear?

ALF. Perfectly. (*Aside*) Very like my own case. (*Aloud*) I found this poor old lady almost insensible at the foot of the mountain. She had just strength enough to beg me to bring her here to you.

ARR. Exactly. You call her an old lady. Well, she *is* an old lady, and she isn't an old lady. Present tense, she *is* an old lady. Imperfect tense, she *was* a young lady.

ALF. Of course she was.

ARR. Ah! but, Future tense, she will be a young lady again—in an hour. That's the curious part of it.. (*To* MINESTRA) Go in, my dear—I should say, my aged sister—and we will take every care of you. (LUIGI *carries* MINESTRA *into monastery.*)

ALF. You are very good.

ARR. Well, I am, and I am not. Present tense, I *am* very good. Imperfect tense, I was confoundedly bad. Future tense, I shall be confoundedly bad again—in an hour.

ALF. We are fortunate in having dropped in upon you during your virtuous phase. (LUIGI *re-enters*).

ARR. Particularly so. It's altogether a curious state of things. I'm such a creature of habit that I find it difficult to remember that I am no longer a rantipole. For instance, I see you have a watch. Perhaps it is a valuable watch. Don't tell me it is; I would rather not know. Now, you can't imagine how difficult I find it not to take that watch. Oh, I know it's wrong; but then I always knew that (*adopting a clerical manner*). By the way, I am collecting a few gold watches to send out to the poor naked savages of— (*Aside*) No, hang it all, let the man alone; you ought to be ashamed of yourself! (*Aloud*) Pardon me, your handkerchief's hanging out. Will you oblige me by putting it out of sight? (ALFREDO *does so.*) Thank you, thank you so much! Temptation, you know, temptation! We are all weak, and it is sometimes difficult to resist.

ALF. (*aside*). Singular character, this Prior. (*Aloud*) Of course I am prepared to give a donation to this monastery in consideration of your taking charge of the old lady (*feeling for his purse*). By-the-bye, where's my purse?

ARR., GIO., *and* LUI. (*falling on their knees*). Not guilty, your worship!

ALF. Of course not. Ha! ha! (*Finds it.*) Oh, here it is!

ALL. Ha! ha! ha!

ARR. Yes, but you frightened us!

ALF. Allow me to present this sum to the funds of the monastery.

ARR. No, thankye; I'd rather not. Here, give it to Father Luigi.

[*Exit* ARROSTINO *into monastery.*

LUI. No, thankye; not for me. Father Giorgio will take it.

[*Exit into monastery.*

GIO. Oh no; Father Giorgio won't. Father Giorgio's a good little boy now—for an hour.

[*Exit into monastery.*

ALF. This is an unaccountable state of things! To please Elvino I pretended to be a Duke, and I selected Ultrice as my Duchess. We drank the wine and we became a Duke and Duchess in real earnest, and, what is odder still, that unpleasant young person exercises an extraordinary fascination over me; while Teresa, whom I used to love so passionately, has completely faded out of my recollection.

Enter TERESA, *crazed.*

SONG.—TERESA.

Willow, willow, where's my love?
Lovers ways are mazy;
All who hear me,
Much I fear me,
Think I'm going crazy.
Willow, willow, where's my love?
Waiting I, and weary—
Willow, willow, where's my love?
Where's my duck-a-deary?

TER. 'Tis but a silly song, and passing dear at the ducat I paid for it. They think anything is good enough for a mad maiden to sing; but though the maid be mad, her ducats are sound, and good gold should buy good wares, and there are none so mad but that they want value for cash!

ALF. Teresa!

TER. (*not recognizing him*). My lord Duke, is it not? My service to your Grace and to your Grace's bravery (*kissing his cloak*). In good

sooth, these are fine trappings, but they'll not trap *me*, for I love a lad who will none of me! My song says he's my duck-a-deary, which is true, in fact; but the expression is weak, and I am not yet mad enough for it. But I shall be, soon—I shall be, soon!

ALF. Teresa!—do you not know Alfredo, who used to love you so dearly?

TER. Alfredo! Alfredo! It is—it is—ha! ha! ha! (*about to embrace him*).

ALF. Don't. That I cannot permit. Under the circumstances, it would be in the last degree unbecoming.

TER. Oh, I had forgotten! Thou lovest another now—a plain girl, compared with me. Methinks thou too must be mad to take up with such a one! But we are all mad—all—all mad!

ALF. I sometimes think so too. But take heart, little one; it is true I love thee not, for I have a bride, and no married man ever loves anybody but his wife.

TER. I am not so mad but that I know *that*. Why, I learnt it at school! But thou art like the rest—thou thinkest that any truism is good enough for a mad girl!

ALF. As I was saying, take heart, for although you are nothing to me now, yet I have ascertained that this spell under which we all labour will be removed in an hour, and I shall then love you as dearly, as passionately as heretofore!

TER. Is this indeed so? In one brief hour? No, no; I dare not believe it!

DUET.—ALFREDO *and* TERESA.

ALF. In days gone by,
But soon to come again,
With ardour pure
I used to pine,
And strove to lure
That heart of thine
With all my might and main.

I know not why,
But now, for thee, I find
I do not care:
To be exact,
Thy beauty rare
Does not attract—
To all thy charms I'm blind!
But take good heart—an hour will pass amain,
And all my love will then come back again!

TER. In days gone by
I played an idle part :
With scornful smile,
And heartless jest
And worldly guile,
Made manifest,
I grieved thy faithful heart.

How changed am I !
The love I dared decline,
Is now the breath
Of life to me.
And till kind Death
Shall set me free
My love shall live for thine !
Be brave, poor heart—an hour will pass amain,
And all his love will then come back again !

Enter ULTRICE.

RECIT.

ULT. So, I have found you !

ALF. (*leaving* TERESA, *and rushing to* ULTRICE, *as though under the influence of a spell*).
Passionately loved one !
Thy dainty hand I kiss—I mean the gloved one !
Oh thou adored with passion most romantic !
Worshipped with all the fire of frenzy frantic !
For one short hour my love consent to share it—
It won't last longer than an hour—I swear it !

ENSEMBLE.

ULT. (*aside*).	ALF. (*aside*).	TER.
The days of scorn are past—	The scorn I felt is past—	An hour will soon have past—
With passion he's demented !	With passion I'm demented !	With passion I'm demented !
Triumphant I, at last !	But still, it will not last—	It won't much longer last—
My heart is now contented.	With that I'll be contented.	With that I'll be contented.
A suppliant at my feet,	A suppliant at her feet,	Though he is at her feet,
Thanks to the wizard's potion—	Thanks to the wizard's potion—	Thanks to the wizard's potion—
With insolence I'll treat	An hour—and obsolete	An hour—and obsolete
His newly-born devotion.	My newly-born devotion !	His newly-born devotion !

[*Exit* ALFREDO *into monastery.* TERESA *attempts to follow him ; she is stopped by* ULTRICE, *who sends her off in the opposite direction.* ULTRICE *remains.*

Enter ULTRICE.

RECIT.—ULTRICE.

An hour? Nay, nay—
A lifetime rather—that is as I will.
His love is mine—yes, mine alone, until
His dying day!
Go, cheat yourselves with promises, poor fools!
I hold the talisman that overrules
The potion's power! (*producing the pocket-book*).
I found the conjuror sleeping and alone—
I stole it! It's mine! my very own!
Alfredo, till he dies, shall wear my gyves!
An hour? Poor fools, that hour shall last your lives!
Ha! ha! an hour!

[*Exit* R. 1. E.

Enter all the chorus of girls running. ALFREDO *comes out of monastery and joins* ULTRICE. *He is followed by all the monks. Enter, also,* PIETRO, BARTOLO, *and* NITA, *the two last still as clockwork figures.*

CHORUS OF GIRLS. Oh, please you not to go away
Until you've seen the clockwork play.
Two figures carry on the plot,
And one's a man—the other's not.
They're full of complicated springs,
And weights, and wheels, and catgut strings—
You wind 'em up, just in the back,
With cracky, cracky, cracky, crack—
Then all the wheels, revolving quick,
Go ticky, ticky, ticky, tick—
And then the figures eat and drink,
And walk and talk, and wink and think,
And quarrel, just like lovers twain,
And kiss and make it up again.

ALL. It's very true, and very quaint—
The one's a man, the other ain't.
You wind 'em up, just in the back,
With cracky, cracky, cracky, crack—
And all the wheels, revolving quick,
Go ticky, ticky, ticky, tick.
It's very true—it's very quaint—
The one's a man—the other ain't!

(*During this,* PIETRO *has been dusting and arranging the figures, who have entered, jerkily, into the spirit of the chorus.*)

PIE. (*coming forward*). May it please your Graces—
These are figures two,
Who, in port and paces,
Show you something new.
Note their human faces,
And the things they do;
We've reserved front places—
(*recognizing them*) Hallo! Why, it's you!
(*to the others*) Alfredo and Ultrice! Peasants two!

ALL. Oh!
What do you mean by this sheer audacity?
What do you mean by this ill-timed joke?
How do you dare defy veracity?

ULT. Spare your unrestrained loquacity,
Listen while we the truth uncloke.
At 'Vino's base design—
The Duke and Duchess aping—
We drank the cursed wine,
For which we all were gaping.
Then all at once we fell
Into the wizard's clutches,
Who changed us, strange to tell,
To genuine Duke and Duchess.

ALL. But—

ULT. Don't ask for further details—cease your chatter;
We've told you all we know about the matter.
[*Exeunt* ALFREDO *and* ULTRICE.

CHORUS. We may as well restrain our useless chatter;
They've told us all they know about the matter!

PIE. (*despondingly*). There's only one thing to be done,
Destroy the antidote by fierce ignition,
And thereby bring back every one
To his (or her) original condition!

ALL. Hurrah!

THE MEN. Sandal and robe we gladly lose,
Here is an end to our calling clerical.

THE GIRLS. Now they may marry whenever they choose,
All of us are with joy hysterical.

BAR. & NITA. We shall be human, body and limb,
Happy to think our state is curable.

PIE. I shall be free from these tortures grim;
They're getting exceedingly unendurable!

ALL. Hurrah! (PIETRO *feels for pocket-book.*)
Quick, quick—the antidote! (*He can't find it*).
How horrified you look!

PIE. I had it in this coat—
Safe in my pocket-book (*feeling for it*)
The truth I must admit,
Some thief has stolen it!

ALL. Oh horror!
Accursed sorcerer! (*threateningly to* PIETRO).
Thou demon-leagued traitor!
Ill-omened harbinger!
Low-born equivocator!
This is a hideous plot
To rob us of our senses—
Restore us on the spot,
Or dread the consequences!

(*Exeunt all but* PIETRO, BARTOLO, *and* NITA. PIETRO *sits in great pain and distress.* BARTOLO *and* NITA *make ineffective attempts to move and speak, but they have "run down."*)

PIE. (*observing their efforts*). Now, then, what's wrong with *you?* Oh, I see. (*Winds them up*).

Spoken together very rapidly.

BAR. Upon my honour, this is a pretty state of things. Clockwork for life, I suppose! It's monstrous—outrageous! What's to become of Nita, and, above all, what's to become of me?

NI. Well, a nice mess you've made of this; to go and lose the only thing that could bring us back to life again. What do you mean by it, you ridiculous old donkey?

PIE. What do you want?

NI. Why, if I'm to be Ophelia for the rest of my life, it would be convenient to know what Ophelia did.

BAR. She coaxed Hamlet, a good deal.

PIE. Nothing of the kind; she committed suicide because Hamlet wouldn't marry her.

NI. What—lately?

PIE. Lately! Several hundred years ago. (NITA *and* BARTOLO *turn and walk rapidly up stage.)* Where are you going?

NI. We're going back several hundred years.

PIE. It's not necessary. You can do it here. (NITA *begins to cry.*)

BAR. I have it. If Hamlet had married Ophelia she wouldn't have committed suicide.

PIE. Well? What then?

BAR. What then? Why; if I marry her at once the motive for the act will be removed!

PIE. Nonsense! Hamlet and Ophelia never married. It would be trifling with the text.

BAR. Anyhow, it's a new reading. What! am I to be the only Hamlet who is not permitted to discover new readings? Bah!

TRIO.—PIETRO, NITA, *and* BARTOLO.

PIE. Ophelia was a dainty little maid,
Who loved a very melancholy Dane;
Whose affection of the heart, so it is said,
Preceded his affection of the brain.
Heir-apparent to the Crown,
He thought lightly of her passion.
Having wandered up and down,
In an incoherent fashion,
When she found he wouldn't wed her,
In a river, in a meadder,
Took a header, and a deader
Was Ophelia!

NITA. Ophelia to her sex was a disgrace,
Whom nobody could feel compassion for;
Ophelia should have gone to Ely Place
To consult an eminent solicitor.
When such promises as these
Breaks a suitor, rich and regal,
Why, substantial damages
Is the panacea legal—
From a jury—sons of Adam,
Though as stony as Macadam,
Maid or madam, she'd have had 'em,
Would Ophelia!

BAR. There's a venerable proverb in my mind,
Which applies to this catastrophe, I think;
To a horse who is unfortunately blind
Any nod is just as good as any wink.

Opportunity I'll seize
Of avoiding any error ;
Of substantial damages
I have always had a terror.
That calamity to parry
Not a moment will I tarry,
Off I'll carry and I'll marry
Poor Ophelia !

[*Exeunt* BARTOLO *and* NITA. *As they go off,* PIETRO *slyly steals their respective keys, and goes off triumphantly in the opposite direction.*

Enter ULTRICE R. 3 E. TERESA *up* C. *steps.*

ULT. (R.C., *comes* C.).
She comes ! Ah, Madame Jilt !
Oh, crazy insolent ! Ah, wonder as thou wilt,
Thy scornful head is bent !

TER. Ultrice ! Ultrice !

ULT. Ah, cruel one !
Thou knowest now
The torture of a love that's gone astray !

TER. Ah ! spare me !

ULT. Thou knowest now
The fate of those who will not when they may

TER. Ah ! spare me !

ULT. Thou knowest now
The sting of jealousy's envenomed dart.

TER. Ah ! spare me !

ULT. Thou knowest now
The deadly famine of a hungry heart.

TER. Ah ! spare me !
Farewell, Alfredo !
(*Turning to* ULTRICE.)
Ere deathly cold
I lie on yonder strand,
Ah, let me hold
The hand that is his hand ; (*taking her hand*)
Ere lost I be
In yonder cold eclipse,
Vouchsafe to me
The lips that are his lips !

(*Kissing* ULTRICE, *who remains motionless.*)

May he forget
His love of old—
Her sun has set
Her tale is told!

(*Goes up stage and mounts parapet overhanging the river. She is about to throw herself off, when* ULTRICE, *who has been struggling with her better feelings, relents.*)

ULT. Hold! Stay thy hand! Teresa, come to me;
My soul is softened and my heart is stirred!
Come to me quickly—I have wrongèd thee.
Pardon, Teresa, I have greatly erred!

TER. Ultrice! (*She rushes to her arms.*)

ULT. Take heart, take heart, for thou shalt righted be;
Live—for thy love shall be restored to thee!
Come hither, all!

Enter all the characters from different entrances—PIETRO, *in great agony.*

CHORUS Now, what is this, and what is that?
We wish to go to yonder valley.
What do you want? what are you at?
Explain your conduct generally!

ULT. Proud of my new-born rank
Which raised me from my clan,
From yonder mountebank
I stole the talisman!

(*She produces it.* PIETRO *clutches at it.*)

ALL. Ah, false one!
From yonder mountebank
She stole the talisman! [*Exit* ULTRICE.

PIE. Another minute and my fate were sealed!
A light—quick—quick!—my fortune for a light!

(*A light is given to him—he burns the parchment.*)

The parchment burns—my tortures slowly yield—
'Tis gone! and with it our distorted plight!

(*Gong—all change to their original characters: the Monks becoming brigands,* MINESTRA *becoming a young woman,* ALFREDO *and* ULTRICE *becoming peasants,* BARTOLO *and* NITA *are restored to humanity, and* PIETRO *recovers his health.* ALFREDO *embraces* TERESA.

CHORUS.

Hurrah!
The spell's removed,
Hurrah!
The {men we / girls they} loved,
Hurrah!
Are {ours / theirs} again,
Hurrah!
With might and main,
Hurrah!

ARR. The Duke and the Duchess, when they travel through the land,
How the pair they will stare, with their high jerry ho!
They will yet fall a prey to the valour of our band,
For we shall not be happy till we get them;
With our high jerry ho!
And our canticle pedantical,
And our mystic, though artistic,
Jerry high, jerry ho!

ALL. With their high jerry ho! &c.

PIE., BAR., NI. The Duke and the Duchess, had they travelled through our land
With their cries of surprise and their high jerry ho!
They'd have seen many things that they wouldn't understand;
Not the least is our show, you may bet them—
With our high jerry ho!
And our clickings and our tickings—
Our emphatic automatic
Jerry high, jerry ho!

ALL. With their high jerry ho! &c.

ALF. & TER. The Duke and the Duchess, if they travel through our land,
As they may, any day, with their high jerry ho!
They will find that we're linked, heart in heart, hand in hand,
And a loving example we'll set them,
With our high jerry ho!
And our notion of devotion,
And our gentle sentimental
Jerry high, jerry ho!

ALL. With their high jerry ho!

CURTAIN.

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